

Attorney Docket No. P70086US0  
Application No. 10/507,498

**Amendments to the claims:**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of claims:**

Claims 1-9 (canceled).

10 (previously presented and withdrawn): An immunological binding partner which recognizes an epitope derived from collagen type II which is comprised in the amino acid sequence HRGYPGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1).

11 (original and withdrawn): A binding partner as claimed in claim 10, which is reactive with said epitope in the context of unwound collagen type II or fragments thereof but not in the context of the wound form of collagen type II.

12 (previously presented and withdrawn): A cell line producing a monoclonal assay which is an immunological binding partner as claimed in claim 10.

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- 13 (previously presented and withdrawn): A kit for performing an assay as claimed in claim 1 and comprising: an immunological binding partner which is immunoreactive with an epitope comprised in the amino acid sequence HRGYPGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1); and means for detecting immunoreaction between said immunological binding partner and a sample.
- 14 (original and withdrawn): A kit as claimed in claim 13, wherein said immunological binding partner bears a detectable label or is immobilized to a solid material.
- 15 (previously presented and withdrawn): A kit as claimed in claim 13, wherein said kit comprises a peptide which comprises said epitope and competes with collagen type II or fragments thereof for binding to said immunological binding partner.
- 16 (original and withdrawn): A kit as claimed in claim 15, wherein said peptide bears a detectable label or is immobilized to a solid surface.
- 17 (new): A method of qualitative or quantitative assay of unwound collagen type II fragments containing amino acid sequence HRGYPGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1) in a biological sample comprising
- contacting the fragments with an antibody that is immunoreactive with an epitope comprised in amino acid sequence HRGYPGLDG (SEQ ID NO: 1) and

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— detecting resulting immunoreaction.

18 (new): A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the epitope consists of five or more amino acids in the sequence.

19 (new): A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the antibody does not react with wound collagen type II fragments.

20 (new): A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein immunoreaction is detected between the epitope and collagen type II fragments of less than 80 kDa.

21 (new): A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the fragments are of less than 30 kDa.

22 (new): A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the fragments are of less than 10 kDa.

23 (new): A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the sample is a biological fluid.

24 (new): A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the biological fluid is serum, urine, tear fluid, synovial fluid, subcutaneous interstitial fluid, a cell culture supernatant fluid, or a cell extract.

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25 (new): A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein detected immunoreaction is indicative of degradation of cartilage.